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Address'd to the Merchants of London.

A

Genuine Narrative
OF THE
TRANSACTIONS
IN

NOVA SCOTIA,
Since the Settlement, *June* 1749,
till *August* the 5th, 1751;

In which the Nature, Soil, and Produce
of the Country are related, with the
particular Attempts of the *Indians* to
disturb the Colony.

By *J O H N W I L S O N,*
Late INSPECTOR of the STORES.

L O N D O N :

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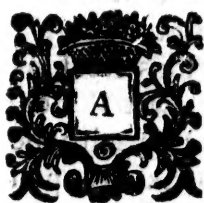
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Colony in *Nova-Scotia*.



S Nothing tends more to the Welfare and Happiness of a Nation, when Peopling a Colony, than to be well-informed of the Nature, Produce, and Genius of the Climate; the Treatment and Encouragement of its first Settlers, and the Probability of encreasing the Advantages, and surmounting the Difficulties that must appear at first setting out; so I think that a faithful Narrative of the Soil, Climate, and Produce of *Nova-Scotia*, in order to open the Eyes of those who are so fond of Novelties, as to leave a well-cultivated Place, abounding not only with the Ne-

cessaries, but likewise the Delicacies of Life, for one quite different. And in order to do this, I shall observe the Rule of *Pythagoras*, upon the Door of whose School, was written this Inscription in *Greek* Characters, "Let no Person enter this School without the Knowledge of *Geography*." Then to begin with the Description of *Hallifax*, the Capital of *Nova-Scotia*. It contains eight Streets in Length, as many in Breadth; and about 6000 Houses. It lies in Latitude 43° , in a cold Air; for which various Reasons are assigned, *viz.* The freezing East Winds, which blow in the same Direction with the general Motion of the Sea, striking upon *Cape Sable*, propagate thro' the Strait that runs between the *Peninsula* of *Acadia*, and the Continent; the vast Number of Woods tending to make the Air damp and foggy; and these chilling by means of the Winds, that employ their fiercest Breath from the Instant that they are driven from the Ice that lies towards the *North Pole*, and is more cold than the Parts which lye in the same Parallel of Latitude in *Norway*, and *Nova-Zembla*. The Reason of this terrible

terrible Cold is, that the Land in North America is not so broad, nor yet is it so far extended as that in the Northern Parts of *Muscovy*, *Tartary*, and *Norway*.

The Infant Colony, have not yet begun to manure the Country, which on the 27th of *June* 1749, the Day of the Fleet, under the Command of Commodore *Roast*, arrived at it, was but one continued Wood, reaching in some Parts within two Feet of the Water Mark.

The Trees at our Arrival were much taller than any ever I saw, either in *England*, or *Scotland*, both of which I have traversed; they are generally *Pine*, *Birch*, *white Beach*, *black Beach*, which last, is a good firm Wood, somewhat resembling *Mahogany*, being a hard close Timber, and so firm, that if a Ball was to strike upon it, a Hole might be made, but the Timber would not rend. There is *Napple* Wood, which resembles pretty nearly the *English* Oak, but is more yielding and moist; and what Oak is there, lyes at a vast Distance up in the Country. There is a coarse kind of Timber called *Hemlock*, which is used for

for Firing, but makes such a crackling and Noise, and disperses into so many Splinters as makes it disagreeable and dangerous for Use ; but of them all the *Pine* is the tallest, and at the same Time thick; being 16 Inches Diameter, very fit for making Masts; several of which, were carried over to *Portsmouth* for that Purpose, in the *Osborn Galley*, Captain *Appleton*, Master, which was launched at *Hallifax*, in *July 1751*.

The Harbour at *Hallifax*, is a large Bay, that propagates from the Ocean for near an 100 Miles, between two Necks of Land, which lye five Miles from the Town. It is in some Places three Miles broad ; the Sea abounds with Fish, such as *Mackrel*, *Eels*, *Haddocks*, *Flounders*, and *Hollow-butts*, which last resembles a *Flounder*, is very large, some weighing thirty Pound : is very good Eating, only requires a vast deal of Butter to make them relish. The other Fish are larger than those in the North of *Scotland*, and are fully as delicious and palatable. But *Cod* which, abounds from the Beginning of *May* till the End of *October*, are only caught in the Ocean ;

Ocean ; are not so long as those in *Scotland*, nor yet so firm, or so relishing, but agree very well with the Salt, and are transported in great Quantities to *Cadiz* in *Spain*, where they are frequently sold by the Quintal, i. e. 112 Pound Weight for 1*l.* or a Guinea. There are some fine Salmon about the Head of the Part called the Bafon, nine Miles from *Hallifax*, but these are vastly rare ; I remember that upon our Arrival several of our People were sickly, but the Fish made, and properly prepared with Broth, diffused so muscilaginous and generous a Juice, as in a short time to render them perfectly whole ; there are some Partridges, wild Duck, and wild Geese, which are as large and as delicious as ours ; Eagles, Hawks, and Swans are far up in the Woods. Last *August*, when I left *Hallifax*, the Woods were for the Space of a Mile every way cut round it ; while the Town and Suburbs extend along the Shore, about three Miles, where they are closed by the Woods.

There are several Gardens, and Enclosures made in the Spaces that have been cleared,

cleared ; Potatoes Carrots, Turnips, Cabbage, Pease and Beans, Onions, and Parsley have been sown in them ; but a Venomous Insect, called the *Grub-Worm*, damages them as soon as they begin to appear, and pry into the very Heart of the Vegetable.

The Soil is of a brownish Hue, of a very crumbly Nature, which may be owing to the vast Number of Leaves that fall from the Woods, and impregnate with the Snows ; and like a Scurvy, cover the Ground, and so very far from being acid, that there has not been a Piece of Clay found thro' all the Tract that has been sought ; and the only Grain that seems to flourish among them is *Indian Corn*, of which one Crop appeared in *October 1759*, and its not doubted but the same may be repeated this Season.

Last Summer five Acres of Land were given to every one of sixteen Persons, who petitioned the Governour for that Purpose ; he granted their Request, but then it was with this express Injunction, to bring it to Perfection, and render it productive as soon

soon as possible; but really its my Opinion that seven Years will pass before they can clear it of the Trunks of the Trees that have been cut. In a Word, I cannot indulge myself in any sanguine Expectation as to the Success of this New Colony, from the above Considerations, and from others more terrible and discouraging, that now I begin to relate.

About *March* the 20th, the Spring begins to succeed a very sharp and rigorous Winter, which lasts from about *November* the 10th, for four Months and near an half, and is much more terrible, with dreadful Showers of Snow, that sometimes continue violent for two Days, and cover the Country, making the Ground three Feet higher than before. These Showers come from all Points of the Compass, but those which proceed from the N. W. and N. W. by N. are the most piercing, it being impossible to endure them. If the Winter in *Nova Scotia* be as mild as it was terrible in *Scotland* in the Year 1740, the Season is reckoned temperate and good.

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Many unfortunate People died of Cold the first Winter after their Settlement. This indeed, may be imputed to the Want of Houses, which only such as could build were able to obtain; and to see the vast Flakes of Snow lying about the Tents of those who had been accustomed to warm Fires about *Newcastle* and *London*, was enough to move the Heart of Stone.

Time would fail me to represent the dismal Spectacle of Vessels coming from *Boston* in *New England*, having their Stern and Head, their Decks and Main-yard covered with Snow, and Pendules of Ice hanging upon the Ropes and Rigging. The Harbour is frozen from every Side, but the Ice terminates before it meets, leaving as much Space as to allow a small Vessel pass to with Ease; but indeed, few visit the Colony in time of those Storms; and last Winter, a Loaf of Bread, containing three Pound eight Ounces, was sold for Sixpence; Beef sells at Sixpence *per* Pound; Mutton at Seven-pence; but Pork is a little more reasonable; the Method of buying these, is thus: The
Creature

Creature is put alive into a Scale, with it's feet tied; and according to its Weight it is sold, most frequently at Two-pence half-penny *per* Pound; the other Creatures are slaughtered in the Market-place, but most frequently such as are capable chuse to buy them on their Feet, and have them slaughtered at their own Houses: With all these, as also Liquors, *viz*, Rum, Brandy, and Beer, they are supplied from *New England*; which likewise furnishes Fowls, and these are sold at the following Prices: A Hen is sold at two Shillings and Sixpence; a Goose at three Shillings and Sixpence; a Duck at three Shillings; and a Pint of Milk costs one Shilling; the Hay, on which the Cowes feed, is brought from *Boston* in *New England*.

In a Word, if the Country were not supplied with Fish, there would be no living for the Poor: Add to all this, that the Poor Inhabitants are under continual Alarms from the *Indians*, who are spirited up by the *French*, who have settled at *Menis* and *Pisgel*; they are made to believe the strangest Stories concerning the

English, and among other Things, that
 “ They, viz. The People of *Great-Britain*,
 “ murdered our Lord *Jesus Christ*.” They
 are furnished by them with Muskets, Han-
 gers, and large Knives, but no Bayonets, or
 Cannon, nor yet are they taught the Man-
 nual Exercise of regular Troops. The new
 Colony is terribly afraid of them ; for they
 come down about the Dawning of the Day,
 sculk in the Bushes, and there wait for
 their Prey ; they are very dexterous and
 alert at Firing, and can frequently do Exe-
 cution at the Distance of 100 Yards ; they
 come upon Houses, which they alarm with
 their Shot ; if they meet with Resistance
 and a superior Force, they fly to the
 Woods, and if pursued, like the *Parthi-
 ans* of old, they turn about and discharge,
 then shelter themselves behind the Thickets,
 whence they let fly Volleys of Shot, and
 Showers of Arrows. In *October* last, about
 eight of the Inhabitants of *Hallifax*, among
 whom was Mr. *Brown*, the Governor’s
 Gardner, another of that Name, an *Irish-
 man*, Bookkeeper to Capt. *Clappam*, went
 to take their Diversion ; and as they were
 Fowling

Fowling, they were attacked by the *Indians*, who took the whole Prisoners; scalp'd the Gardener with a large Knife, which they wear for that Purpose, and threw him into the Sea, whence he was cast upon the Ground about eight Days after; the other was destroyed, so far as never to be heard of since. The remaining six were conducted Prisoners to the *French* Settlement at *Menis*, where they underwent great Hardships for want of proper Bed-cloaths, and the Necessaries of Life, receiving nothing in the Twenty-four Hours but a little Barley Meal drained thro' the Water; and on *Sunday* were allowed a Piece of Beef without Salt. In this Condition they continued five Months, till relieved. But before I quit this Part of my Narrative, it will not be foreign to my Purpose to give an Account of their Manner of Scalping, that so the Reader may both have an Idea of the Savage, and barbarous Tempers of these inhuman Cannibals, and at the same Time, be invited to set a proper Value upon a Country that is now civilized; and which before the *Romans* came into it, was a Province

verb, and Bye-Word, among the Nations ; for such was their Brutality, that they would, like *Lycaon*, Kill and serve up their Lodgers at their voracious Entertainments.

These *Indians* chain the unfortunate Prisoner to a large thick Tree, and bind his Hands and his Feet, then beginning from the middle of the *Craneum*, they cut quite round towards the Neck ; this being done, they then tear off the Skin, leaving the Skull bare ; an Inflammation quickly follows, the Patients fevers, and dies in the most exquisite Tortures. In this Situation was Poor *Browan* found, while his Comrades were thought to have undergone the same Hardships, they not having been heard off, till accidentally some Butchers going up to *Menis*, to buy Cattle, got Intelligence of the Matter, and informed Governor *Cornwallis* ; he immediately wrote to the Commanding Officer of a little Fort, belonging to *Great-Britain*, in the Neighbourhood of *Menis*, and recommended to him to make Reprisals, to the Intent that the *English* Prisoners might be redeem'd. A Party was accordingly sent out, and order'd to

to seize upon any of the Inhabitants of *Menis* they might meet with. The Detachment having gone a little Way, came upon a *French* Priest as he was hunting in the Woods, laid hold of him, and conducted him to the Fort, whence he was sent under a strong Guard to *Hallifax*, where he was confined to the Governor's House, but met with quite different Usage from that which was given to our Countrymen.

The Governor directly wrote a Letter to the *French* Commander at *Menis*, demanding a Restoration of the Prisoners, and proffering to deliver up the Priest in their Room, which was complied with.

Tho' this might serve to illustrate the the horrid Barbarity of the *Indians*, and to shew what little Confidence is to be put in our neighbouring Colony; yet, I have something equally surprising to relate. On the 27th of *May* last, a Party of these *Indians* surprized *Dartmouth*, a small Town opposite to *Hallifax*, a little before four in the Morning; they all at once appeared, fired thro' the Windows and Doors, and,

and killed fifteen Persons, including Women and Children; wounded seven, three of whom died in the Hospital; six Men were carried away, and never heard of since. The Party quartered there, being alarmed by the Noise in the Morning, were instantly drawn up by Lieutenant *Clark*, of Colonel *Warburton's* Regiment, who commanded there; they marched in haste to the *Indians*, who discharged some Shot, killed a Serjeant dead upon the Spot, and wounded the superior Officer in the Leg; the former being very brave, run before the others, where he was attacked, and got several Wounds; his right Hand was cut off, and the Thumb and Ring-finger of his Left-Hand; he was miserably mangled by their Hangers and Knives; three Soldiers were wounded.

The *Indians*, after discharging one Volley run off with Precipitation, not waiting the Arrival of our Troops, and giving them an Opportunity of firing when just at their Breasts with the Muzzle of their Guns, as the Commandant vainly imagined: They were not pursued for fear an Ambush, as the Officer gave out; tho' I am
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apt to believe that his not pursuing, was rather owing to the little Confidence he had in the Troops over whom he commanded ; and here, I protest, that in my humble Apprehension, it's no good Policy to send raw and undisciplined Forces, I mean Soldiers, who have not been accustomed with Battles, to make good such desperate Settlements ; and I can well remember what a poor Figure Col. *Lascelle's* Regiment, now stationed in *Nova Scotia*, made at the Battle of *Preston-pans* in 1745 ; but as this is too delicate a Point, I shall not further enlarge upon it.

'Tis easy to imagine what a mighty Consternation was raised in *Hallifax*, upon hearing the Report of the Guns about the Dawn of the Morning ; every one got up and run to the Beach, *i. e.* the Sea-Shore, while forty or fifty Men, twenty of whom were Grenadiers, were put on Board of three large Boats under the Command of Captain *Murray*, and Lieutenant *Auchterlony* ; their Passage was abundantly quick, but not so quick as to intercept the Maroders, who had plied their Heels and escaped ; the Troops

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followed

followed for some Miles into the Woods, but all to no Purpose.

It was a dismal Spectacle to behold the Husband lying weltring in his Blood; and clasp'd in the Arms of his Spouse; nor less terrible to see the Spouse breathing her last, and reposing her Head upon the Arm of her Husband; the weaned Child was lying dead in the Nurse's Arms, and the sucking Child stretched on the Breast of his Mother.

During this Confusion, the Lieutenant was carried over to *Hallifax*, and by proper Remedies in six Weeks Time he was able to go abroad in an armed Chair, carried by two Soldiers, and on the 5th of *August*, when the *Osborn* Galley set Sail, he was capable of walking upon Crutches.

In the mean Time all imaginable Care was taken for Defence of *Dartmouth*; the Command was reinforced, and they are now busy in Walling in the Town after the Manner of *Hallifax*; i. e. Trees of half a Foot Diameter are driven into the Ground,

Ground, and these again crossed by others for rendering the Defence more secure.

But, before I quit this Part, I must trouble my Reader with the Account of a Boy of about eight Years of Age, whom I frequently have seen and conversed with at Mr. Orpin's House in *Hallifax*, whose Spouse is a *Scotch* Woman. Upon the Morning of the 27th of *May*, when the *Indians* made the Attack upon *Dartmouth*, the Boy's Father was one of the six who were carried away; the Child who had been out of the way at the time of the Assault, missing his Father, went into the Woods in Quest of him, and having gone too far, one of the Maroders seized upon him, and taking out a large Knife, held him while another scalped him, amidst the most piercing Groans, and then made off leaving him as dead; here he continued in this Situation till next Morning, when, being recovered a little, he knew not where he was, or where to go; however hearing the signal Gun at *Hallifax*, and then the *Trevally*, *i. e.* the Drums beat, he directed his Rout by the Sound, and

being but two Miles off, he came into the Town, where he exhibited, in his own Person as terrible a Spectacle as any I have been describing. The Mother of the Boy, with two other Children, one of whom sucking upon the Breast, directly embarked in a Boat for *Hallifax*, and applied to the Governor, who assigned Mr. *Orpins's* House as most convenient for one in his dismal Situation, it adjoining to the House of Mr. *Grant*, the Surgeon of the Place, who applied Linnen Clothes, plaister'd over with Grease; and afterwards covered with warm Flannels; in this Situation he continued for a Month, and began to recover by degrees, to the Astonishment of all who saw him.

I thought it my Duty thus far to oblige my Country with a faithful Narrative, in Order to prevent their being imposed upon by a Parcel of News Writers, who trump up chimerical Stories, and publish them afterwards in Books, to the great Detriment of honest Men; and so render for ever Miserable, such as deserve better of their Country, than to be enticed to go to a Place, whose
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chilling Colds in Winter must benumb the Senses, and whose hazy and thick Foggs in Summer must raise Consumptions, involve in Misery, and an ill State of Health.

Let then the Possessors of *New England*, so much enraged at the giving up *Cape Breton*, that they threaten a Mutiny, people this New Colony, and stand upon the Defensive for their own Preservation ; but let not those of *Old England*, or even *Old Scotland* itself, expose themselves to such an unwholesome Climate, where Money is very scarce, and every Thing extremely dear ; where the Prices of Work are as great as in *London*, and where every Hour of the Day they may be in Danger of falling a Sacrifice to a robust, vigorous, and savage Set of Mortals, who are incensed by a Party, naturally Enemies to the *British* Isle.

F I N I S.